The Farm Colony Bill

Why It May Be Considered as a Measure of Self-Defence.

By Edmond Kelly.

TWELVE years ago a farm colony bill was drawn by a committee appointed by all the charitable societies in New York; but it did not secure at Albany a moment's serious attention. We are told by our legislators that poverty is not a crime. When we answered that our bill did not make of it more of a crime than the penal code, but only proposed to substitute for the expensive and degenerating system of the misnamed workhouse, inexpensive and regenerating work on a state farm, and that the plan had operated effectually in Holland and Belgium for over a hundred years, we were told that the plan might do in Holland, but it would not do here. So also in the archives of the French senate may still be read the report made by Thiers, when appointed by Louis Philippe on a committee to investigate the first railroad ever built, which concludes as follows: "Railroads may serve a purpose in England, but they are not suited to France."

A similar bill, improved by borrowing from late experience in Switzerland, has been drawn once more by a similar committee, to which was added our Commissioner of Charities, Mr. Hebberd. This bill is likely to receive a better reception at Albany than the previous one because it will be introduced and supported by the great railroads of New York state; for the railroads have discovered that the tramp is an intolerable nuisance. Col. Pangborn, of the Baltimore and Ohio, has lately estimated that the damage occasioned by tramps to railroads in the United States amounts in a single year to $25,000,000. For the tramp in America does not tramp; he rides on railroads; he sets fire to freight cars and freight stations; he obstructs the lines, wrecks trains, and is a fruitful cause of action for damages. The measure, therefore, which was thrown out by the Assembly when proposed from motives of humanity, will be passed as a measure of self-defense. And self-defense thus constitutes an element of the power always at work on the side of progress that neither ignorance nor interest will be able to resist. Just as cholera forced from the British Parliament in 1830 hygienic measures which up to that time the landlords had been able successfully to resist, so every evil carries within itself the agent of its own destruction, and the very men who now resist progress will one day awaken to the fact that they themselves, even in their moments of bitterest resistance, have all along been the unconscious instruments of this very power which some of them today affect to despise.—From the Century.

Model Heathen Marriages

By Maud Churton Braby.

THE more one studies the problem of marriage the more plain does it become that many of the heathen ideas on the subject are infinitely superior to ours. One of the dreams of Socialist reformers, for instance, is the endowment of motherhood. They regard it as a Utopian vision of the far future not likely to be fulfilled for years to come. Among the Mohammedans this dream is a reality. The maintenance of children devolves so exclusively on the father that the mother is entitled to claim wages for nursing them! The importance of her services to the state in rearing healthy citizens is thus recognized in the most practical manner.

We hear a good deal of agitation nowadays about making the conditions of divorce equal to both sexes. Among the Shawanese this is already done. An unfaithful husband can be turned adrift by his wife, who retains all his property. They go one better and make drunkenness also an offense for which divorce can be obtained.

The savage tribes whom we strive to convert have apparently a much clearer idea of the real basis of marriage, the end for which it was ordained, than we, who seem to marry for almost every other reason than the desire for children. With savages the offspring is the main purpose of wedlock. Married couples in some tribes do not live together at all until shortly before or sometimes actually after the birth of the first child, and in some cases the marriage is not binding until a child is born. Among others a childless wife can at any time quit her husband, but may not marry again. Westermark is authority, but I cannot recall the names of the tribes from memory. These poor heathens recognize, it will be seen, that children are the chief tie—the only real bond—that unites a man and woman permanently—in short, that "marriage is rooted in family rather than family in marriage."

The Corporate "We"

By the Rev. Dr. Robert Mackenzie, of the Rutgers Riverside Presbyterian Church, New York.

CORPORATIONS, they say, have no conscience, and this is true, for there is no longer the personal "I" but the corporate "we." The church has no conscience, the college class has no conscience. Conscience cannot be distributed any more than a suit of clothes can be distributed among a hundred men. It is like the seamless robe of Christ. You can cast lots for it, but you cannot distribute it. Conscience is personal. Hence there is nothing more lawless, inhuman, brutal than a company of men who have sunk the "I [illegible] in the corporate "we." This is the central issue, as it is the central danger of this day. Manifold drifts of opinion are setting toward all that is corporate, collected, communal, to the threatened submergence of the personal self.

But whether you are one of four hundred or of two, let not the artificial corporate body blind you to the natural responsibility of self. The wrong will be shared by all. The responsibility will be shared by each. It is the very task of legal science so to make a combination of many as to evade the responsibility of each.

We have, therefore, to wrench away the self out of the entanglement of the many. As men in a mob are suffocating we elbow our way to the edge that we may breathe. "Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin as self-neglect."

Would Tell Its Troubles.

"Does misery really love companionship?"

"That depends. I don't think it cares for companionship that wants to do the talking."—Kansas City Journal.

There are in Holland many societies of from ten to fifty members, whose object is to get goods at wholesale rates. The usual method is to advertise in the newspapers and receive bids.

An Elastic Peach Crop.

Good old Georgia! Feeling the common woe over the pinching times, she is ready to do her share in relieving suffering.

Georgia has nineteen million peach trees in her orchards. Through the care and diligence of her orchardists thirteen million of the trees are loaded with fruit.—Detroit Free Press.

In Germany the telephone charges amount to only about $5 per subscriber annually.

THE DEFEATED.

Because it was good to be fighting, to put forth my strength,
To endeavor myself to the utmost, the failure at length
Is never less bitter and hard, or lighter to bear
Because all the glorious memories of battle I share
With the victors who pass me on horseback (good fellows who won!)
With stern, ardent faces fixed forward and fronting the sun.
No failure is comfortless, arid. When battle again
Is joined I shall fight all the harder—at last not in vain!
Though my courage was solid and speckless, my arm good before,
This pure bitterness strengthens and betters me; no failure more!
At last I shall win, and that victory pure shall redeem
All the mighty lost effort and hope, all the disapproved dream.
And out of the depths of my knowledge of bitter defeat
I shall know to the utmost that minute how triumph is sweet.
—S. H. Kemper, in Metropolitan Magazine.

"Oh, Little Son of Mine"

By Anne Story Allen.

It was very dark in the brass cage, and the little bundle of yellow feathers moped unhappily. There weren't any cheerful nice sounds about the room; there hadn't been for many days. It seemed to Sixpence that the world had come to an end.

And then of a sudden it was different, for the horrid black thing that made it always night was taken gently off, and the beautiful day shone all over and around Sixpence. He chirped feebly in response. He tried a few notes of his long disused voice, and then he burst into a triumphant resurrection anthem, a joyful thanksgiving for the light that had come.

"Poor little chap," a voice said, a man's voice.

Sixpence stopped a second, then began once more.

There was a quick step across the hall; the door opened, and a black-gowned, white-faced woman stood in the room, tense and questioning.

"The bird! He mustn't sing."

"Why not?" The man who had taken the dark cloth from the cage returned. He asked the question only with his eyes, but the woman understood.

"I can't let him sing. It's too soon. It's too cruel—" She shut her lips tight in an effort at self-control.

"It is cruel," agreed the man. "That's why I took this off, and let in the day. I don't want to seem arbitrary, Aileen, but I must ask you to let little Sixpence have all the joy and happiness he is entitled to."

"Very well."

Aileen Trent went slowly back across the hall. Alec, her husband, watched her till she disappeared in the library beyond. Then he turned to the brass cage again.

The bird hopped to the side of the cage. Trent reached a finger between the bars. Then ensued a fluttering and a scolding and a final descent on the intruding finger in battle royal.

Alec Trent smiled sadly. It was at this point that the boy would always shout with glee, and poke his tiny finger into the cage in disastrous imitation.

Out into the hall, past the library door and up to his own den walked Trent slowly. Then he took some papers from his pocket, some books of reference from his revolving stand, and seated himself at his desk. One long look out through the window into vacancy; then he sighed and plunged into the work before him.

Below, by the library fire, the mother of his boy lay on a couch and under her closed lids the tears were creeping. The clock on the mantel struck four. Aileen raised a languid hand, and rang the bell.

"Order the victoria, please," she said to the maid. "Have the roses come from the florist's?" Then she got up slowly.

"Six months tomorrow," she said. "Six months!"

"Aileen!"

She turned to see her husband in the doorway. He wore his riding clothes.

"I couldn't work. It is too beautiful out of doors. Won't you come with me?"

Aileen opened her mouth to reply, but he stopped her.

"Oh! I know where you're going, but does it do you any good—or him? Come out with me, like a good girl. It will put the roses in your cheeks. I can't bear to see you so pale—"

He took a step forward. His handsome face was full of longing.

"Come on, little girl, can't we—can't things be as they used to? Can't we jog about together again, and be happy?"

"Happy!"

He started back at the bitterness of his wife's tone.

"I'll be happy again, Alec, when I hear my boy's voice. I don't want the roses in my cheeks again. I don't want to ride. I want to go to his grave where I find peace and comfort."

Trent straightened, and a cold light came into his eyes.

"You find neither peace nor comfort there, Aileen, for if you did you would want to share them. Instead, you shut yourself away from me. To you the boy is dead; to me he is alive. I am going down through the woods that he loved, down by the brook where he played, and I shall hear his pretty laugh, and—"

"Stop!" Aileen's eyes flashed at her husband.

"It is sacrilege for you to speak of him like that. Go—and enjoy yourself!"

Trent's face whitened. Then a slow smile came to his mouth.

"You have not been good to me since the boy came, Aileen," he said, "and since he went you have been cruel."

He turned on his heel and was gone.

Aileen climbed slowly up the stairs to her room. Every movement seemed an effort.

Her maid was waiting for her. Aileen slipped from her house gown and into the long black frock held for her. She felt the heavy veil droop from her hat with a weight that before she had not noticed. She took up a glove and pulled it on.

And then through the window she saw Alec. He was on his horse; he was cantering down the drive; he was at the gate, and the horse had shied at a bit of paper on the grass. Then they had disappeared behind the trees.

"You have not been good to me since the boy came." That was unjust of Alec. How had she been bad? She had been devoted to the child, and so had he at first. They had not been out much together, but that was because she would trust no one to take the boy out except she was there. They had not been much together in the house, either, but that was because Alec must not smoke in the nurseries. And how had she been cruel since he died? Alec was cruel. He had left her time after time alone to suffer alone; had said he must get out of the house. Only just now he had let the bird sing; had said he must be happy.

"Here is the other glove." The maid tried not to speak impatiently. She was used to waiting while her mistress stared from the window.

Aileen took the glove mechanically.

"Thank you," she said.

She turned to her mirror, adjusted her hat, saw a sad white face, with wide sorrowful eyes, a drooping mouth and hair strained back unbecomingly.

"Mr. Trent is all right today?"

Aileen turned frowningly on the maid.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean—I only meant—had he gotten over his lameness—from the fall?"

Aileen stared at her.

"He is perfectly well," she said. "What fall?" she added to herself.

Then she remembered his horse at the gate. Was that the same horse? She had meant to ask him to sell that creature. Before the boy died there had been talk one day of Alec's being thrown. But he had made light of it.

"Mr. Trent is a careless rider," she found herself saying, "but he has never been seriously hurt."

"Oh! no, madam. It was only that Peter says Bullfinch hates the woods. Mr. Trent always goes that way."

The horse had shied. Alec was a careless rider. Aileen buttoned the second glove.

"Where are the flowers?"

"I have them."

"Take them to the carriage."

But she did not follow. She went to the window again. "Through the woods that he loved and down by the brook where he played." And then on and down the road and across fields, a wild, free ride. Aileen knew how Alec would go. They had ridden side by side too many times for her to forget the eager leaning forward in the saddle, the careless hold on the reins. She must remember to ask him to be more careful.

Well, it was time to go. The maid returned a trifle disturbed. She had an engagement at half-past four. It was always safe to make one on Saturdays.

Aileen stood in the middle of the room pulling off her glove.

"Another pair, madam?"

"Get my habit."

"But, madam, it is packed away."

"Get it out."

She tugged her hat and veil from coils of hair that pulled and hurt her. Then the long black dress lay on the floor in a heap. Her riding clothes fitted loosely over her thin figure. She buttoned the coat over a heart that beat heavily in sudden and unaccountable fear.

It seemed an hour before the black mare was brought around. Then Aileen cantered down the drive with the bridle reins hanging from her stiff fingers. The mare turned to the left out of the gate. By a miracle Aileen did not check her. By the brook he had said, and through the woods, and this was not the way. She must turn—and still she did not.

Down the road a mile the mare swerved, and with a nicker darted down across a grassy gutter, up a slight bank beyond, rose at a stone wall and dropped gently to her feet. Then she cantered across a smooth field, and Aileen weakly slid from the saddle to Alec's side.

He was lying on his face and his horse grazed at a little distance, the reins hanging over his head. Aileen touched his hand gently, but he did not move. She leaned down and laid her lips to his fingers. There was a movement of the broad shoulders and something like a sob.

"Alec!"

His eyes opened slowly.

"Is it you, Aileen?"

He sat up slowly.

"Why, dearest, did you decide to ride after all?" he asked.

"Oh, Alec, I heard him, I heard him, 'Go! Go!' he said, just as he used, only I thought of you, I had to find you."

Trent looked at her strangely.

"And you are not hurt? You were not thrown?"

"No, child."

Aileen's eyes filled.

"Alec, oh Alec! What have I done to you?"

Trent's arms were about her.

"Yo uhave come to me, darling,' he said. 'And, please God, you will never get away from me again."

"He kept saying, 'Go! Go!'" she sobbed.

"Now you have heard him, too, Aileen. And you can doubt that he lives, can you?"

"Can it be his voice, Alec? It can't be."

"How can we tell? You have heard it: Now and then I hear it. You thought it meant I was in danger. So I was, in the greatest danger. My heart was hardening toward you. But now—" He rested his lips on her hair.

* * * *

They rode home through the early autumn twilight. The stillness of country road and field, the purity and freshness of country air were about them, and beneath them the rhythmic motion of the horse's stride.

"It is good to be glad again," said Alec, his hand on his wife's.

"It is good to be together," said Aileen softly, "and you must help me to be glad."

"Because we still have the boy," said Alec.

And Aileen answered bravely, "Yes, we still have the boy!"—From the American Home Monthly.

THE THAMES.

The Lower and Upper Reaches of England's Royal River.

The charm of the Thames, as of England, is the fusion of a shadowy past with an actual present. The mere name of the royal river summons up ghostly pageants of state, dropping down from Windsor to Chelsea or Whitehall; its music murmurs through all English poetry—this "Silver-footed Thames," this "Sweet Thames," which runs so softly in the immortal bridal song. Down all its two hundred flowing miles—from Thame's Head to the Nore—it is an open scroll of history and legend, which he may read who will. Indeed it is pleasant—"in barge with branches beautified"—to drift there like the old poet.

Where the upper Thames flows I do not know that much has changed. To-day the waterway belongs to democracy. On bank holidays, even on Sundays, it is swarmed over by Kipps and his friends; but there are many aristocratic miles and river luxury has never been higher nor more accomplished. How many river clubs there are I know not; nor can you count the houseboats, the bungalows, the teahouse boats, the score and one luxurious features of river life. Within the last ten years the Thames has taken on a great deal of the Old-World air of pageantry. Those were the days of tents and picnics—and in memory I see myself trudging with hampers and bottles while girls (notably one who is now another's) laughed unkindly. Now you lunch at a club; now you pull up at a teahouse boat; now everything is done for you and you merely pay. But one thing has not changed, the most beautiful portion of the river is the seven miles from Maidenhead to Marlow Lock—from the Woodlands of Taplow, Cliveden, Hedsor to the Quarry woods.—From Vance Thompson, in the Outing Magazine.

Courage and Patience.

If you imagine that you "have a kick coming" just think of Mrs. Bella Cook, aged 87 years, and bedridden for 52 years, supporting herself all that time. She certainly gives an example of courage and patience that calls for admiration.—New York Herald.